

VERMONT CENTER FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, INC.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of Special Meeting: January 7, 2014

Chair Boes called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The membership was represented as follows:

Richard Boes (Agency of Administration)	Present
Aaron Worthley (Private Sector – GIS Community)	Present
Jarlath O’Neil-Dunne (Higher Education)	Present
Peter Fellows (Regional Planning Commissions)	Present
Thomas Hurd (Agency of Transportation)	Present
VACANT (House of Representatives)	Absent
Senator Eldred French (Vermont Senate)	Absent
Beverly Wemple (Higher Education)	Present
Melissa Prindiville (Agency of Commerce & Community Development)	Present
Peter Telep (Agency of Natural Resources)	Present
Bruce Urie (VT Municipalities)	Present
Scott Roper (Higher Education)	Present

Executive Director David Brotzman and Outreach Coordinator Leslie Pelch represented the staff.

Discussion of VCGI’s Status

Brotzman expressed reservations about VCGI joining the State Archives under the Secretary of State. He feels that it would be a step back for VCGI due to limited technological capacity of Sec. of State.

O’Neil-Dunne asks whether the state would absorb VCGI as is or would determine which functions of VCGI it would absorb or accomplish in other ways.

Boes replies that the Executive branch would be more likely to make that sort of decision, not the Legislature. The Legislature will only consider the question of whether to accept or reject legislation to bring VCGI into state, not how that will be accomplished.

O’Neil-Dunne asks whether board should prepare detailed options depending on what the Legislature decides?

Boes says Administration could negotiate the issue if the Legislature rejects the bill to move VCGI into DII. The negotiation can happen in Appropriations and Gov. Operations committees.

Wemple asks Brotzman what the committees have expressed so far. Brotzman says last year House Gov. Ops. didn’t seem to have any issues with the bill. House Approps did have questions regarding money, so they sent it back to Gov. Ops. He has heard that Senate Gov. Ops. Has an issue with VCGI moving into DII because it would result in DII getting bigger.

Brotzman asked Pelch to explain letter from VCGI Staff (see attached). Pelch explained that staff wanted to express reservations about the idea of presenting a number of different options to the legislature. Staff feels that it is important to stick with the proposal to move into DII, with an increase to existing funding as the only other option.

Fellows asked for clarification of a section of the report that Brotzman did for the legislature. There is some confusion about \$75K mentioned, but it is simply the savings that would be realized by moving into DII, not the amount that VCGI would need to remain outside DII and continue to operate at current level.

Boes points out that one of the benefits of moving into DII is that it would be easier for state entities to contract with

VCGI. There was some discussion of why exactly a state entity would contract with VCGI and why it would happen in the future. Pelch offered an explanation that state entities can contract with VCGI if they do not want to build their own GIS capacity, or while they are building it, or to explore GIS options.

Hurd put forward the idea that VCGI might take on more of a project management role for some state entities.

O'Neil-Dunne points out that VCGI is well positioned to help with state data management and accessibility. Boes agrees that DII is starting to take on more data-related efforts that often are public facing.

Fellows points out that another option for where VCGI could move into state government might be ACCD.

Prindiville pointed out that the idea of "backup plans" need not be presented to the Legislature. O'Neil-Dunne and Worthley agree that VCGI can have backup plans but not bring them explicitly to the Legislative discussion.

Wemple wonders whether the Legislature won't say "Do more with less like everyone else" if VCGI asks for more funding. Pelch points out that we have been doing that for years, in addition to taking on the VT Ortho Program with no extra funding.

Question is asked: What happens to our reserve funds if we do move into DII? Can it move with us? Can it be used to cover costs of vacation accrued?

Brotzman points out that we do have enough grants/reserve funds to allow us to function at our current level through FY15 if we use it all up. But he would not advise this. Rather, he would plan to lay off one staff person in October of 2014 and one in March of 2015 if we are not brought into DII and we do not receive an increase in our appropriation.

Boes reports on IT Classification Committee position towards our job descriptions, titles, pay, etc. This will help Kate of the Dept. of Human Resources with her testimony at the Legislature.

Brotzman points out that the board needs to decide what to do, given that previously approved resolution indicates a particular course of action. Does board want to amend or rescind previous resolution? **Board decided not to rescind, amend or make any changes to previous vote.**

Boes suggests that board needs concrete information about how much additional money VCGI needs in order to not lay people off. He asks Brotzman how much in the way of grants and contracts we can handle. Boes suggests we ask for \$150K from Legislature if they reject bill to move VCGI into DII.

Boes suggests we calculate how much it would cost to allow us to survive for one year and how much it would take to make us sustainable. This would allow us to remain functional while continuing to pursue joining DII.

VCGI should identify how it supports efficiencies in state government: software costs, software maintenance costs, project coordination within the state.

Worthley suggests the first fallback option should be a 3-year sustainable increase to VCGI's appropriation. Second fallback would be 1-year increase.

It was requested that Brotzman put together a table indicating amount of grant and contract funds VCGI has secured over the years. Might be most helpful to not include NTIA in that.

Brotzman described what he intends to present at his legislative testimony:

- Powerpoint summarizing situation and reasons for requested move to DII
- Quantification of the savings to be realized by move to DII
- Separate out what state currently appropriates to VCGI

- Highlight how we serve the state – specifics about number of people, projects, and how staff would need to be cut.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:08 AM.